

# Homeshare Sector Report Summer 2016.

**SharedLivesPlus**

THE UK NETWORK FOR SHARED LIVES AND HOMESHARE

[www.SharedLivesPlus.org.uk](http://www.SharedLivesPlus.org.uk)

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## About Shared Lives Plus.

Shared Lives Plus is the UK network for Shared Lives and Homeshare.

We help our members to work together to survive and thrive, influencing local and national policy makers and providing support, training, events, resources, research programmes and access to insurance.

Our members include 5,000 Shared Lives carers, 150 local Shared Lives Schemes and Homeshare organisations across the UK and Republic of Ireland.

To join us, visit [www.SharedLivesPlus.org.uk](http://www.SharedLivesPlus.org.uk) or call **0151 227 3499**.

## Shared Lives Plus Homeshare Network

The Homeshare network has grown significantly since the May 2015 report. Network members benefit from regular telephone meetings which enable schemes to keep in touch, share ideas, exchange information and discuss practice and policy issues.

The network currently has 16 'paid up' members including delivery organisations and wider stakeholders. Eight organisations are in the process of joining the network.

For the majority of the period reported one full time Policy and Development Officer supported by a number of other Shared Lives Plus staff have been working to:

- Provide support and advice to the network members, policy makers and anyone considering developing a Homeshare Scheme.
- Facilitate a growing number of network members to come together to share good practice and learning.
- Promote Homeshare to wider stakeholder groups.
- Develop resources and information to support the delivery and development of Homeshare schemes.
- Support the work of the Homeshare Partner Programme.

An additional part time Homeshare Policy and Development Officer has been in post since mid-March 2016.

*"The Homeshare scheme fits my needs perfectly as I love helping people and I enjoy caring, sharing and making a positive difference to the Householders' life. I help Mr. B with cooking, light housework and just being there for company. In the times we are now living in, it is a great way to support each other and I also benefit by having a lovely home to live in at an affordable price."*

*Homesharer. Novus Homeshare. [www.NovusHomeshare.org.uk](http://www.NovusHomeshare.org.uk)*

## Summary

Homeshare has the potential to change the face of social care in the UK and this report evidences increased interest and growth in the sector.

Homeshare enables two unrelated people to share a home for mutual benefit and is an internationally recognised model that operates across 14 countries and is growing in popularity.

For the first time Homeshare schemes have been asked to report formally on scheme activity and practice.

### **Key findings include:**

- Increased interest and significant growth in Homeshare with the number of schemes increasing from 8 to 23 and Homeshare matches increasing by 23% to 222 in the past 12 months.
- Homeshare has moved out of London and now operates in many key cities across the country.
- The longest reported Homeshare match is 5 years. On average a Homeshare match lasts for 9 months.
- Schemes are being increasingly innovative with a number of new delivery models specifically developed to support a wider range of participants including; care leavers, people with learning disability and people with long term health conditions.
- There is novel thinking in relation to costing models with some schemes able to; offer reduced fees for Householders, utilise personal budgets and increase Homesharer financial contributions to the shared household expenses.
- There is an increase in the use of volunteers in the delivery of Homeshare.
- Safeguarding practice and process is robust and effective. There has been no reported safeguarding incident in a Homeshare scheme in the past 12 months.

### **Key issues for schemes include:**

- Homeshare remains low key and relatively unknown in the UK.
- There is currently no widespread commissioning of Homeshare by Health and Social Care commissioners.
- There continues to be a lack of engagement with schemes by Health and Social Care professionals.
- Many potential Householders are still accessing Homeshare at 'crisis point' when residential care is probably a more appropriate option.
- Safeguarding participants is still cited by statutory agencies as being the key reason for lack of engagement with Homeshare.

The Homeshare Partner Programme is now in its second year. The £2 million programme developed by the Lloyds Bank Foundation and the Big Lottery Fund has brought together a range of partners including; Shared Lives Plus, Age UK, the Foyer Federation and Social Care Institute for Excellence to support the establishment and development of eight new schemes along with resources and support for the wider Homeshare Network. This programme has clearly gone a long way in supporting additional growth in the sector over the past 12 months along with kick starting increased interest in the potential for Homeshare.

## **What is Homeshare?**

Homeshare enables two unrelated people to share a home for mutual benefit. Typically, an older Householder with a room to spare will be carefully matched with a younger person who will provide an agreed amount of support in exchange for their accommodation. The support provided by the Homesharer might include help with daily living tasks such as; cleaning, shopping, gardening, overnight security and companionship.

Homesharing is a simple concept with numerous and wide ranging benefits for all participants. It has potential to be an effective and sustainable response to two key policy challenges we have in society:

- Helping an ageing population stay in their own homes for longer.
- Affordable accommodation for younger people at a time of record housing shortages and high rent.

*"Homeshare offers a new and sustainable model for people to live more independently and take control of their lives through supporting one another."*

*Dawn Austwick, Chief Executive of the Big Lottery Fund*

## What defines a Homeshare scheme?

- A relationship brokered, monitored and supported by a third party organisation.
- All participants are vetted and assessed for their suitability for participation.
- Creating a 'good match' that supports a mutually agreeable sociable living arrangement is a key priority.
- The relationship is a reciprocal arrangement – both the Homesharer and the Householder have something they need and something they can give to the Homeshare relationship.
- The Homesharer provides an agreed amount of help and support to the Householder whilst living in their home for an agreed period of time.
- Homesharers are not charged market rate rent but agree to contribute fairly to household living costs.
- The Homeshare arrangement between the two parties is governed by a carefully worded agreement that avoids creating a contract of employment or tenancy rights.
- There are no elements of personal care provided by the Homesharer to the Householder.

## Who delivers Homeshare?

The past year has seen substantial growth in the number of organisations delivering Homeshare. The number of schemes has grown from eight to 23.

Schemes now operate across a much larger geographical area with dedicated schemes focussing specifically in:

- Adur and Worthing
- Bath and Bristol
- Dublin
- Greater London
- Kensington and Chelsea
- Knowsley
- Leeds
- Midlands
- Nottinghamshire
- Republic of Ireland
- Rochdale and Greater Manchester
- Shropshire and the surrounding area
- Southern England
- Windsor and Maidenhead



One scheme is able to provide national coverage and is successfully supporting Homeshare matches across the UK.

The legal status of Homeshare schemes remains varied. Of the schemes that responded to the survey, ten report themselves as private sector companies, four as Community Interest Companies, six as charities and one is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

The past 12 months has seen the start-up of fifteen new Homeshare schemes - nine of which have yet to make their first match. The majority of other schemes have been operating between one and four years. Two schemes have been delivering Homeshare for over 10 years.

60% of schemes report delivering other services in addition to Homeshare. These services are wide ranging but in general either complement or enhance the Homeshare offer. They include; social housing, Shared Lives, domiciliary care, nursing care, community support services, social activity, development, training and consultancy services.



Schemes are funded from a number of sources. Six report being fully grant funded, five funded by income generated by the scheme, three schemes are part grant and part income funded. Other Homeshare schemes report being funded in a number of ways including by; a parent company, private donations, private finance and one scheme is commissioned by a local authority.

Staffing appears to be dependent on how the scheme is set up and if the scheme is part of a wider offer of support. The larger, more established schemes have a ratio of one paid member of staff to 25 matches. Schemes recognise the importance of dedicated staff for delivery of a successful scheme.

Staffing structures include a mix of full and part time staff. Two organisations report using volunteers in administration support roles in addition to paid staff and one organisation is wholly run by a volunteer staff team of one.

Schemes embedded in larger organisations are often able to tap into a range of useful and supportive wider staff expertise including; marketing, financial support, business development, strategic and operational development. Schemes are utilising their experience of delivering more established services to support the development of their Homeshare practice and process particularly around initial assessment of participants, ongoing support and safeguarding.

The majority of Homeshare schemes are delivering what can be described as the classic model of Homeshare. The model is focused around the needs of an older Householder and on the whole is perceived as a low cost and affordable solution to enable the Householder to; continue living in their own home for longer, feel safer and have increased levels of social interaction. Simultaneously, this model makes affordable, quality accommodation more widely accessible for younger generations who can equally benefit from the opportunity to establish community links.

***“Social isolation can have devastating impacts on health and well-being but it’s not just an issue reserved for older people. Young people can be equally affected, particularly young care leavers or those not in education, employment or training.”***

*Fiona Mather Business Development Manager, Knowsley Housing Trust*

In the UK both Homesharer and Householder make similar financial contributions to the scheme which enable the delivery organisations to provide; all the safeguarding checks, make an appropriate match, provide ongoing support to the relationship and resolve any issues. On average the fee is £140 per month for the Householder and £160 per month for the Homesharer. We know that some schemes are able to be flexible in their approach to ongoing fees for Householders and are prepared to negotiate an affordable fee to support the engagement of a wider range of participants.

Many schemes have a range of other charges including registration fees and matching fees.

In all but two schemes Homesharers are expected to make a reasonable additional financial contribution toward Household expenses directly to the Householder.

Some of the newly funded schemes have a different focus which will test a number of Homeshare match scenarios and financial models, including:

- Matching young people leaving care and NEET with active retired older people who will act as mentors and provide a safe and nurturing home environment.
- Matching Householders with learning disabilities with students and young professionals to support their transition to independent living.
- No direct charges to either the Householder or Homesharer and accessing other available funds to support the costs of the relationship (including exploring how Housing Benefit and personal budgets can be used to fund the Homeshare relationship.)

Information we have collected through the survey, network meetings, conversations with scheme participants and staff tell us that the majority of schemes are striving to deliver high quality services that are able to respond positively and effectively to issues.

Schemes continue to prioritise safeguarding. All current network members have robust assessment and verification practices for both Householders and Homesharers which include; application forms, suitability assessment of participants and the home to be shared, criminal record checks, references and interviews.

Structured ongoing support is seen by schemes as a vital part of safeguarding participants. Schemes are able to demonstrate good practice in relation to ongoing monitoring relationships.

Most schemes operate a trial period for the Homeshare match with regular telephone, email, text and face to face contact. There is often an end of trial review before any further commitment is made.

There has been no reported safeguarding incident in a Homeshare relationship in the past 12 months.

Recent innovation in Homeshare includes:

- A scheme brokering an arrangement with a local hotel who will provide a room if a Homesharer needs to leave a Homeshare arrangement quickly.
- Increasing use of volunteers to support paid Homeshare staff in a range of activities including; marketing, administration and to provide support to the Homeshare match.
- Financial credit checks on both the Householder and Homesharer to ensure they are able to afford monthly fees and the setting up of direct debits for payment of fees for both.

## Who uses Homeshare?

Homeshare matches have increased by 23% in the past 12 months.

Schemes are reporting 222 active matches. Two thirds of these matches are spread over just four organisations. Not all schemes reported their current match numbers and we believe that the actual number of matches is closer to 300. Approximately ¾ of all matches are within the M25.

The longest reported Homeshare match is five years. A number of schemes report matches that have been active between three and five years.

Schemes had a total of 48 'ended matches', the two key reasons for matches ending were cited as:

- the Householder needing to go into full time residential care
- the relationship running its course and ending as planned

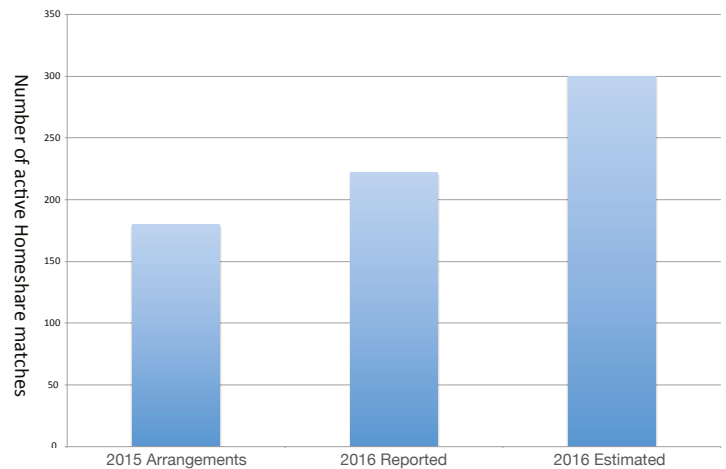
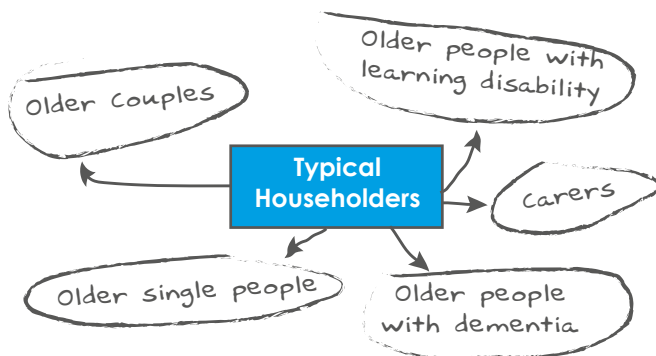


Fig. 1: Number of Active Homeshare Matches

32% of Householders and 23% of Homesharers went on to be re-matched in another Homeshare arrangement.

Schemes tell us that there are currently 46 potential Householders and 73 potential Homesharers waiting to be matched.

Householders are mostly older single people and/or older people with dementia. Other significant Householder participants include; older couples, carers and older people with learning disability.



*"I'd just like to tell you how absolutely delighted I am with Mum's sharer. Mum says they are like old friends! I wouldn't have believed it possible to hear her so positive about it. She was very reluctant to have anyone outside the family living with her."*

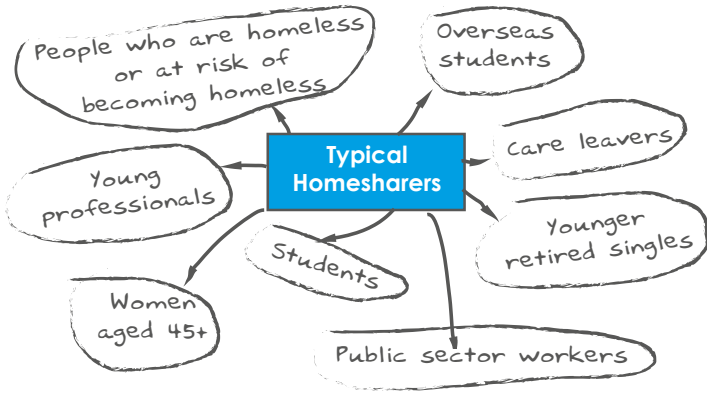
*Daughter of a Householder. Share and Care  
[www.shareandcare.org.uk](http://www.shareandcare.org.uk)*

Current Homesharers are predominantly young professionals, students and public sector workers. Other Homesharer groups include; overseas students, younger retired singles, women aged 45+, care leavers and people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

The majority of referrals for both Householders and Homesharers come as self-referral and as a direct response to local, targeted, low level advertising i.e. leaflets, talks to groups or local media adverts. However, family members, friends and other supporters are encouraged to be involved in; the initial assessment, helping select an appropriate Homesharer, supporting and monitoring the relationship.

Schemes still struggle to make meaningful working links with Health and Social Care professionals and no scheme reported any referrals from this source.

Schemes turned down 59 potential Homesharers in the past year the main reason being that they had 'unrealistic expectations of the Homeshare relationship'.



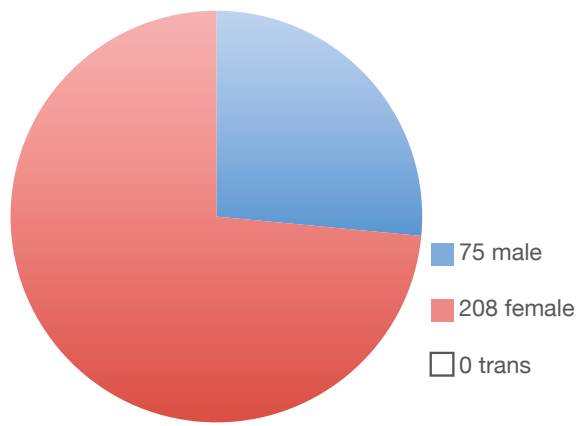
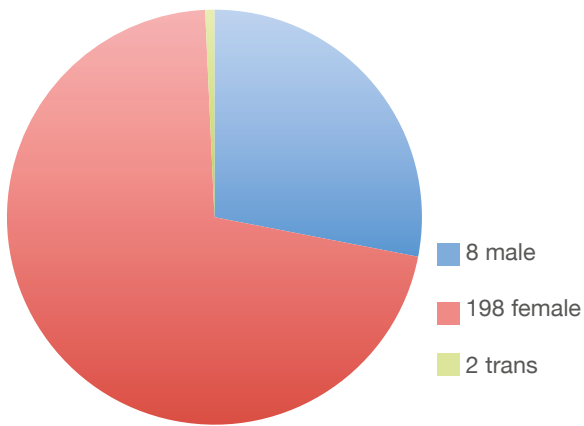
31 potential Householders were not able to be accommodated by schemes. The two main reasons were; 'the level of support the person needed was outside the limitations of Homeshare' and 'the person did not live in the area covered by the scheme'. Many potential Householders are still accessing Homeshare at 'crisis point' when residential care is probably a more appropriate option.

15 schemes were able to provide information in relation to Equality and Diversity. Of the 15 who reported only seven were able to provide all the information requested.

Schemes reported that approximately 2/3rds of all Householders and Homesharers are female. 83% of Householders and 59% of Homesharers described themselves as white British/Irish/Scottish and 40% of Homesharers described themselves as mixed race or other ethnic group.

**Gender distribution of Householders:**

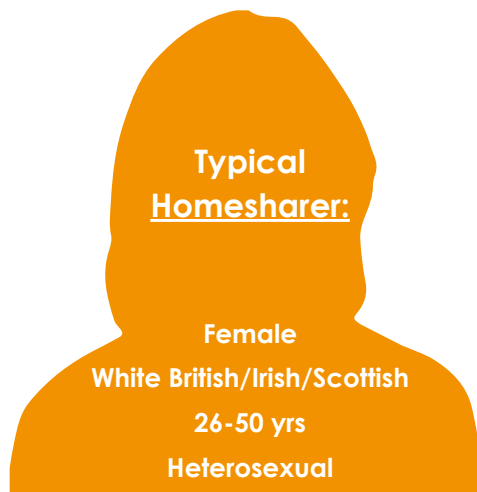
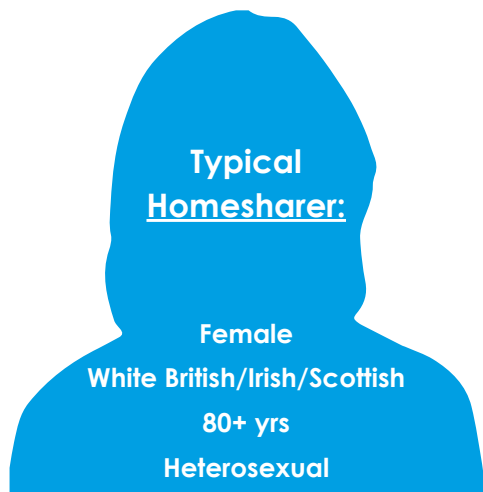
**Gender distribution of Homesharers:**



The majority of Householders are over 80 years old. Homesharers fall predominantly into two age groups: 26 to 35 years old and 36 to 50 years old.

Both Householders and Homesharers predominantly described themselves as Heterosexual.

43 Householders and 12 Homesharers describe themselves as having a disability.





## Developments

Over the past 12 months the Shared Lives Plus staff have responded to a total of 140 enquires from potential Householders and Homesharers. 43% of enquiries have been from people wanting to engage in Homeshare in the Greater London area however, enquiries from other key cities including: Glasgow, Edinburgh, Manchester, Nottingham and Derby reflect the growing interest in Homeshare outside of London.

Shared Lives Plus Homeshare staff have been actively engaged working with 26 organisations and individuals to support the development of new schemes.

We are working with a small number of Local Authorities to support them to consider Homeshare as a potential solution to local issues related to older people, social care and affordable housing but only one council to date had made a financial investment to test the Homeshare model. Several other councils are keen to promote Homeshare strategically as a Housing and Social Care option but at the time of writing, this had not been transferred into on the ground services.

A dedicated web portal for Homeshare will come online in August 2016 providing information, resources and support for schemes, potential Householders, Homesharers, commissioners and policy makers. An updated and extended version of the Good Practice Guide will be available on the website.

Homeshare is unregulated but operating schemes are keen to demonstrate that they work to a high standard. The Shared Lives Plus Quality Assurance Framework, developed in partnership with the Homeshare community and wider stakeholders, will be launched in Summer 2016 with the first schemes signing up and demonstrating they are able to provide a safe and effective service later in the year.

Shared Lives Plus is planning to host the first Homeshare UK network conference in November 2016.

## What are the Challenges and Barriers for Homeshare?

Schemes have reported a number of challenges and barriers currently impacting on delivery of Homeshare.

- Homeshare is still relatively unknown and has little validity with Health and Social Care professionals who remain unwilling to engage with existing schemes by developing dedicated referral pipelines, joint working partnerships and access to those older people who might benefit from a Homeshare.
- The key challenge for most schemes is the lack of early engagement from potential Householders. Potential Householders often come late to Homeshare which is reflected in the numbers of people being turned down by schemes or having to end their Homeshare and access residential care.
- There is no formal academic research to evidence Homeshare as a cost-effective social care solution which reduces isolation and loneliness and supports the Householder to live independently longer.
- There are increased numbers of people with dementia accessing Homeshare schemes. Schemes have mixed expertise with this client group. There are no validated assessment and monitoring tools to assess and monitor the suitability for participation of this client group.
- There is still a low take up of Homeshare by elderly males.
- Limited grant funding is available for the testing, start-up and development of Homeshare schemes.
- Limited information is available to support grant applications particularly in relation to the financial modelling of a Homeshare scheme.

- There has been a growing number of reports from schemes in relation to dealing with non-payment of the Homeshare fees.
- There is no consistency from Local Authorities in relation to Council Tax and Homeshare. The relationship between the Householder and Homesharer is often not fully understood by Council employees and many Householders have lost their right to Single Person Council Tax Discount. Some Homeshare organisations have been able to negotiate individual cases, this is often time consuming but usually results in the discount being restored.
- Although some schemes are able to provide evidence of internal monitoring in relation to Equality and Diversity, there is no consistent approach or validated tool to collect this information. Many of the schemes who were not able to provide equality and diversity information in the 2016 survey also report that they did not intend to start collecting this information in the next 12 months.
- There is no widespread central promotion and marketing of the Homeshare model to key policy and decision makers.
- It appears that very few operational schemes formally evaluate their Homeshare scheme. No operational scheme to date has commissioned an external evaluation.
- A number of schemes have reported that having a more active network and dedicated support from Shared Lives Plus Homeshare staff is essential for the growing sector but often find that staff are spread too thin and are not able to get 'overly' involved in helping to resolve on the ground issues with organisations.
- The use of housing benefit and personal budget is relatively untested and some schemes are reluctant to consider participants who are unable to meet costs from their own funds.
- Safeguarding concerns still appear to be one of the key barriers preventing statutory agencies engaging with Homeshare despite schemes being able to demonstrate they have robust practice and process in place to ensure they are operating in a safe and effective way.
- The majority of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are still poorly serviced by Homeshare and there is little funding available to support the start up and development of schemes.
- There continues to be no widespread commissioning of Homeshare services.
- Designated rural areas are largely not covered by Homeshare and there has been no dedicated testing of the Homeshare model in a rural setting.

## Recommendations and Learning

- Homeshare should be considered as part of every local Sustainability and Transformation Plan and by Health and Wellbeing Boards.
- To embed Homeshare into local housing and older people strategy there needs to be work undertaken to influence policy and decision makers at a local and national level.
- Schemes can increase their validity and standing with local Health and Social Care professionals by committing to the Shared Lives Plus Homeshare Quality Assurance Framework through which they can demonstrate that they are delivering a safe and effective scheme and are continually striving to improve quality, practice and process.
- Schemes continue to have huge potential to be a self-financing preventive intervention, but can only be

successful where local agencies and Health and Social Care professionals value and promote the scheme and work with scheme staff to develop dedicated referral pipelines of potential Householders.

- Schemes need to have access to more robust and standardized Monitoring and Evaluation tools to be able to demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of their scheme.
- Schemes need to establish clear aims and objectives that can be monitored and measured, give more structure to the scheme and support further development of new practice and process.
- There are key policy issues that need to be resolved particularly in relation to single person council tax discount and housing benefit.
- Schemes need to engage with a more diverse client group and be reflective of the communities in which they operate.

## Methodology

The information collected for this report has been used by Shared Lives Plus to evidence the current status of the Homeshare Sector for the period April 2015 to March 2016.

The survey collected evidence under six headings:

- 1 - Information about Organisations delivering Homeshare
- 2 - Information about Homeshare Schemes
- 3 - Homeshare Matches
- 4 - Scheme Participants
- 5 - Equality and Diversity
- 6 - Issues and Challenges

Other information used in this report has been gathered from Homeshare network meetings where practice and policy issues are a regular agenda discussion item.

We would like to thank the following organisations and network members who have provided information, contributed to discussions and supported us to complete this sector report.

Ategi Homeshare [www.ategi.org.uk](http://www.ategi.org.uk)

Adur and Worthing Homeshare 01903 528600

Careaid [www.careaid.co.uk](http://www.careaid.co.uk)

C and V Inspire [www.cvinspire.co.uk](http://www.cvinspire.co.uk)

Click Homeshare [www.clickhomeshare.org](http://www.clickhomeshare.org)

Care2Stay [enquiries@care2stay.com](mailto:enquiries@care2stay.com)

Draycott Homeshare [www.draycotthomeshare.co.uk](http://www.draycotthomeshare.co.uk)

Elderhomes [www.elderhomeshare.ie](http://www.elderhomeshare.ie)

Edinburgh Development Group Homeshare 0131 476 0522

Homeshare West [www.homesharewest.org](http://www.homesharewest.org)

Homeshare Scotland [www.homeshare-scotland.org](http://www.homeshare-scotland.org)

Homeshare Oxford [www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/our-services/homeshareoxford](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/our-services/homeshareoxford)

Homeshare Isle of Wight 01983 525282

Homeshare International [www.homeshare.org](http://www.homeshare.org)

In Homing [www.inhoming.com](http://www.inhoming.com)

Knowsley Homeshare 077810 053 875

Leeds Homeshare 0113 378 5410 [homeshare@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:homeshare@leeds.gov.uk)

Novus Homeshare [www.novus-homeshare.org.uk](http://www.novus-homeshare.org.uk)

Positive Steps Shropshire [www.positivestepsshropshire.com](http://www.positivestepsshropshire.com)

PossAbilities Homeshare [www.possabilities.org.uk/wp/homeshare](http://www.possabilities.org.uk/wp/homeshare)

Room For Tea [www.roomfortea.com](http://www.roomfortea.com)

Share & Care [www.shareandcare.co.uk](http://www.shareandcare.co.uk)

Support Match [www.supportmatch.co.uk](http://www.supportmatch.co.uk)

## Homeshare International – promoting housing for help worldwide.

Shared Lives Plus is a member of Homeshare International and contributes to worldwide learning, sharing of resources and information.

Homeshare across the world is going from strength to strength. Homeshare now operates in 14 countries and is growing. The 2015 World Congress hosted a record number of delegates and participating countries.

Homeshare International aims to:

- Provide a link between all Homeshare programmes around the world, enabling the agencies involved to share information;
- Raise awareness of Homeshare and its potential among professionals and policy makers in housing, social work and other relevant fields;
- Stimulate the setting up of new Homeshare programmes;
- Support and encourage good practice in running programmes;
- Encourage potential Householders and Homesharers to join the programmes;
- Encourage academics to carry out research into the contribution Homeshare can make to the social needs it seeks to address.

Homeshare International has formed the Homeshare International Research Advisory Group, HIRAG to undertake international research and publish Factsheets.

[www.homeshare.org](http://www.homeshare.org)

